LABOUR MONTHLY

Founded 1921 Editor: R. Palme Dutt

MARXISM—150 YEARS OF VINDICATION

The Editor

★

WE ARE HERE AGAIN!

Bill Jones

★

FUTURE OF THE LEFT

D. N. Pritt

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USA—THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

Ivor Montagu

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Australia & Vietnam, Judah Waten; November 1917: Documents Old & New, Andrew Rothstein; Cartoons by Scorpio

The Arts Today: Anne Dyson, John Weaver, Bob Dawson

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Notes of the Month

MARXISM—150 YEARS OF VINDICATION

'Everywhere the bourgeoisie considers the spectre laid for good.'
MARX, letter to Sorge, September 27, 1873.

April 16, 1968

Of course it is not one hundred and fifty years from the birth of Marxism. It is one hundred and twenty years from the first classic formulation of fully-developed Marxism in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. But the one hundred and fifty years from the birth of Marx on May 5, 1818, which we commemorate this month, constitutes a historical epoch worthy of examination in the light of Marxism, the epoch of the development of the modern world from the end of the Napoleonic wars to the present day, the epoch which Marxism first illuminated in theory and has since increasingly shaped in practice.

Test of Practice

A century and a half is adequate time for a theory to be judged by practice. A century and a half after the English Revolution, which was the forerunner of modern revolutions, England had become the leader and organiser of counter-revolution against the French Revolution. A century and a half after the American Revolution, which had sounded the tocsin of democratic hope to the oppressed of Europe, the United States had become the citadel of the multi-millionaires sliding into the world economic depression. A century and a half after the French Revolution, which had kindled the inspiration of the battle for liberty, equality and fraternity of all mankind, France had become the paid satellite of American imperialism to fasten the chains of Nato on itself and half of Europe.

Judgment of History

But a century and a half after the birth of Marx, the ideas of genius which found expression in the teachings of Marx and Engels, carried forward by Lenin in the modern era, illuminating the path of history and charting the course forward from class society to classless society, have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate their truth and their power in practice on an ever extending scale throughout the world, equally in the analysis of capitalism and its outcome, the development of the working-class movement, the

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extending victories of working-class power on the basis of Marxism, the building of socialism, the present apoplexy of imperialist development and the process of advance of the world socialist revolution. The international Communist movement grown from the handful of the old Communist League to fifty millions today. Socialism has won and been established across one-third of the world; and socialism has only won through in those countries where parties based on Marxism-Leninism have led the working people.

Refuters Refuted

The whole course of this historic advance has been littered with pedantic 'refutations' and 'disproofs' of Marxism, each enjoying its mayfly day of sunshine publicity and now lost in the dustbin. Countless knight crusaders and gladiators of counter-revolution, from Cavaignac to Thiers, from Bismarck to Kolchak, from Hitler to Dulles, have declared the communist spectre banished for ever, only to end themselves in defeat. At every sharp turn and painful moment in the arduous ascending road of the revolution there has never been lacking a host of profound observers and loud-voiced wiseacres to proclaim the 'fatal crisis' and 'disintegration' of world communism. It was 'finished' after the crushing of the Commune. It was 'finished' after the collapse of the International in 1914. It was 'finished' after Nep. It was 'finished' after the Twentieth Congress. Today, it is 'finished' again with the present phase of the Chinese Revolution or the growing pains of the new socialist régimes in Eastern Europe. From every such sharp turning point and testing time Marxism has emerged with renewed vitality and ever greater strength in the real historical world. As Klara Zetkin proclaimed in the days before 1917, when the enemy was still wrapped in complacent self-satisfaction over the crushing of the Commune and the defeat of 1905, the indomitable Klara Zetkin with her blazing revolutionary confidence invoked the inextinguishable spirit of the revolution giving the answer to these enemies: 'I Was! I Am! I Shall Be!' The record of half a century has proved the justice of her confidence. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.* World History is the World Court of Judgment.*

* It is characteristic that even present-day West Germany, simultaneously with banning the Communist Party, has the cool effrontery to issue this year a special 30-pfennig stamp bearing the familiar bearded visage of Karl Marx in commemoration of his birth at Trier 150 years ago. Once again the truth is demonstrated of Lenin's words: 'During the lifetime of great revolutionaries the oppressing classes have invariably meted out to them relentless persecution . . . After their death attempts are usually made to turn them into harmless saints.'

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Marx and the Era of Revolution

When Marx was born in 1818, Napoleon was still alive, captive in St. Helena, prisoner of the British oligarchy which still feared him as the embodiment of the heritage of the French Revolution, despite all his militarist and empire-building distortions of that heritage, and for his role in shattering the foundations of the old feudal-reactionary order in Europe. The victorious powers of reaction dreamed of chaining up for ever the dreaded spectre of revolution. Castlereagh, Metternich and the Tsar presided over the subjection of Europe in bondage. The vain dreams of the Holy Alliance anticipated the cold war of Truman and Dulles. Equally to no avail. Within one year of the birth of Marx, Peterloo had foreshadowed the future, and within four years Castlereagh had cut his throat. Within seven years the Dekabrist revolt had foreshadowed the future in Russia. Within twelve years the July revolution had overthrown the restored Bourbon monarchy in France, even though in the first stage only to replace it by the limited monarchy of the bankers' nominee. By 1848 the year of revolutions in Europe had dawned.

Hegel's Significance for Revolution

All the new life that was bursting forth in Europe to break through the chilling snows of the rule of the Holy Alliance and its reactionary successors during the boyhood and early youth of Marx, drew its inspiration from the fountain head of the French Revolution, and the preceding prophets of the Enlightenment who had prepared the way. All sought to find the solution to the problems which that revolution had failed to solve. Alike in literature with the Romantic school, represented by Shelley and Byron in England; in philosophy with Fichte and Hegel; and in politics with the heirs of the Jacobins and the beginnings of the working-class movement and Chartism, this new inspiration was breaking through. Hegel, who ended up as a conservative apologist of Prussian autocracy, but who first achieved the highest level and climax of classical pre-Marxist philosophy, drew his initial inspiration from the French Revolution and its conception of Reason remoulding the world. In a famous passage he wrote of the French Revolution:

> The idea of Right asserted itself, and the old fabric of injustice broke down. It was a glorious sunrise. All thinking beings celebrated that event. A noble emotion reigned in that epoch; the world was thrilled with spiritual enthusiasm as if the divine had now become a reality in the world.

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All human history, Hegel taught, begins with revolt; and he instanced the traditions of every mythology: the revolt of Adam and Eve eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge and punished with divine wrath in the Biblical mythology; or the revolt of Prometheus in the Greek mythology winning fire for mankind, and chained to the rock in eternal torture for punishment, but never submitting. The dialectic of Hegel was the mighty weapon with which he destroyed all the assumptions of metaphysics and dogma, and laid bare the laws equally of thought and of reality as an unending process of contradictory development, ceaselessly annihilating all that might seem permanent and static, and no less ceaselessly creating anew on a higher level, but laws that can be understood and whose understanding becomes the key to freedom. Although the dialectic in Hegel's hands became distorted by idealist mystifications, resulting finally in a monstrous 'system', the essential significance of the dialectic, 'the rational kernel within the mystical shell', as Marx said, was profoundly revolutionary. The philosophy of Hegel, declared Herzen, is 'the algebra of revolution'.

From Idealist Dialectics to Materialist Dialectics

Thus there were two sides of Hegel—the conservative and the revolutionary. Hegel taught: 'The real is the rational; the rational is the real.' The first half declares that all that exists in the world today, with all the horrors of suffering and injustice, can be rationally understood, how and why it has come about. This half in isolation can become the basis of conservatism. But the second half declares that what the human reason is capable of conceiving to replace the existing social order by a new social order can be fulfilled in reality, because the fact that a stage of development has been reached when such a conception can arise means that the conditions have developed for its fulfilment. This is the revolutionary aspect of Hegel's teaching. Thus it is not surprising that there developed two schools of Hegelians: the Right and the Left. It was among the Left Hegelians or Young Hegelians that Marx shaped his thinking, rapidly won recognition in the forefront among their spokesmen, but then proceeded to advance beyond their limitations. They had carried forward the critical method of Hegel to the criticism of religion, the state and all social institutions. But their criticism remained theoretical, to convince opinion of the error of traditional conventional ideas. Feuerbach had sought to displace the idealism of Hegel by materialism, but it was still the

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passive materialism of the French eighteenth-century philosophers, by which man is only the product of material conditions, and not himself in turn the creator transforming material conditions. It was Marx who, with his keen sense of the living real world and of the necessity of the unity of theory and practice, in the midst of all this ferment of discussion succeeded to elaborate the solution to the problem to combine the powerful critical method of the dialectic, but freed from subjective idealist mystification, with the firm objective basis of materialism, but freed from the passive mechanical character given it by its previous exponents, and thus reach the foundation and outlook of materialist dialectics—the foundation and outlook of Marxism. Thereby the weapon was forged, not only to interpret the world, but to transform the world. And that transformation has been going forward ever since at an increasing pace, as the working-class movement and the whole movement for human emancipation has been able to build and organise its forces and steer its course more and more consciously on the basis of Marxism.

Two Kinds of Dynamite

In 1867 two events occurred which exemplified the two paths of the world. In that year the first volume of *Capital* was published —the monumental classic which more than any other embodied the harvest of so many long years of research and theoretical work, years that were at the same time crowded with intensive practical activity as in the leadership of the First International. *Capital* not only laid bare for the first time the laws of motion of capitalist society, tracing its character as a historical phase with a beginning and an end, in place of the twaddle about supposed eternal 'economic laws' offered by the bourgeois economists. It not only revealed the scientific basis of exploitation in place of the moralising sermons which had previously been the customary diet of socialists, and thereby showed the path of the working class and the class struggle to the future outcome in socialist society. The book also demonstrated by its whole structure and presentation the whole method of materialist dialectics, better than any textbook could do, as well as throwing out fiery sparks all along the route on questions of art, literature and history. In the same year Nobel invented dynamite.

Two Paths—Two Worlds

In this confluence of two events in that same year just over a century ago were symbolised the two paths of two opposing worlds.

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Two kinds of dynamite. The dynamite of socialism: the explosive power of the idea, of theory, to illuminate the consciousness of millions all over the world in the ensuing century, and inspire them to end the society of class exploitation and to build the new socialist society. The dynamite of capitalism: the dynamite of nitro-glycerine to rend and burn and destroy the flesh of millions of human beings in the ensuing century. Nobel, who in his will devoted the fortune which he had amassed from his explosives to establish his Prize for Peace, stated his belief when his invention was new that dynamite was so terrible a weapon that it would make war in future impossible. The same blind theory is expressed today about nuclear weapons. Fond illusions. In 1871 the German dynamite shells bombarded Paris. But in that same 1871 the Paris Commune demonstrated the first heroic conquest of political power by the working class, the first fulfilment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Marx designated it in his immortal *Civil War in France*: the inspiration of the working class in every country for the ensuing generation right on to 1905 and 1917; the signal of the future era. Two paths. Two worlds.

The Course of Revolution

The road of the world revolution in our time from the old society to the new has been neither smooth nor easy. But the whole modern era, now for more than half a century, of the deepening general crisis of capitalism and the extending world socialist revolution has drummed Marxism in practice into the heads of the blindest and the most uncomprehending, until today there is scarcely a speech of a politician, an article in a newspaper or a book on current affairs, which does not contain its observations—usually illiterate—on Marxism. These present-day fashionable 'interpreters' and critics of Marxism, having been forced to abandon their previous ostrich rôle of appearing to be unaware of its existence, now monotonously repeat all the second-hand fallacies from which the most elementary acquaintance with what Marx and Lenin really taught would have saved them. Thus, in their estimation of the modern era they assume that communists expected the world revolution to burst like some millenium over the entire world, or at any rate simultaneously in the leading capitalist countries, and so, surveying the record of the half century since 1917, they triumphantly point out that this has not happened. They are as unaware as unborn infants that Marx and Lenin repeatedly emphasised that the world revolution

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and the transition to communism would be a complex process extending over many decades.

Inevitability—But No Dates

The commonplace confusion that communist confidence in the inevitability of the world socialist revolution eventually conquering over the entire world, meant that communists in 1917 based their calculations on assumptions of the immediate pending victory of the socialist revolution in other countries, was explicitly exploded by Lenin in his Letter to American Workers in 1918:

> We place our stakes on the inevitability of the international revolution; but that does not mean that we are fools enough to place our stakes on the inevitability of the revolution coming on some *definite* and early date. . . . We know that revolutions are not made to order.

And in that same year, in his speech to the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1918, he described the epoch of 'the collapse of capitalism in its entirety and the birth of socialist society' as

> a whole epoch in history, a whole epoch of various kinds of wars, imperialist wars, civil wars inside countries, the intertwining of the two, national wars liberating the nationalities oppressed by the imperialists and by various combinations of imperialist powers that will inevitably enter into various alliances in the epoch of tremendous state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates, This epoch, the epoch of gigantic cataclysms, of mass decisions forcibly imposed by war, of crises—this epoch has begun and we can see it clearly—is only the beginning.

A description half a century ago not lacking insight into the actual record of this half century.

It Moves

With triumph these same critics of the supposed 'failure' of Marxism in the modern world point out that the socialist revolution —which before 1917 they had dismissed as an impossible dream— took place, not as they imagine Marx to have expected in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe, but in the weakest imperialist power, Russia. Thereby they only reveal their ignorance that Marx and Engels from the third quarter of the nineteenth century had explicitly repudiated their previous expectation of the beginning of the revolution in Western Europe, and had pointed to Russia as 'the vanguard of revolutionary action in Europe'. With

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similar triumph they point out that the extension of the revolution beyond Russia—which they had previously discounted as a dream—has taken place, not as they imagine Lenin to have expected in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe (that was Trotsky's error), but in backward countries which had previously been colonial areas of imperialism. Thereby they only reveal their ignorance that this is precisely what Lenin had anticipated in his last article in 1923. With triumph they point out that, while they have to admit the socialist revolution has now extended also in Europe beyond Russia, it has 'only' so far transformed the previous relatively weaker capitalist countries in Eastern and Central Europe, and has not yet reached the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and North America. They forget that Lenin said at the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1918:

> The world socialist revolution cannot begin so easily in the advanced countries as the revolution began in Russia . . . To start without preparation a revolution in a country in which capitalism is developed, in which it has produced a democratic culture and organisation available to everybody, down to the last man—to do so would be wrong, absurd.

Today the cracks have begun to become manifest even in these citadels.

Bankruptcy of Empires

One after another, the empires of capitalism go down. Marx wrote in his Preface to the second edition of *Capital* in 1873 how the crisis of capitalism would 'drum dialectics even into the heads of the mushroom-upstarts of the new, holy Prusso-German empire'. That 'Prusso-German empire' went down in the first world war. Hitler's 'Thousand Year Reich' which succeeded it, after the Western powers had sedulously rebuilt German imperialism, and after it had swept through and subjugated the other nations of continental Europe, went down in twelve years, when faced with the indomitable collective strength and heroism of the socialist Soviet people, in the vanguard of the liberation fight of the peoples of the world. With the customary 'reversal of alliances' traditional in capitalist diplomacy, the fall of Nazism twenty-three years ago should not blind us to the renewed menace now that the blindly repetitive policy of the Western powers has once again performed the Sisyphean task of rebuilding German imperialism and militarism, and neo-Nazism and expansionist aims are again in the open. After the second world war, when liberation was speeding through the world, the

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Anglo-American armies took on the rôle of garrisons and policemen of the old order, and socialism was checked in those parts of Europe where the power of these armies and dollar penetration extended. But British and French imperialism bit the dust at Suez; it was not Nasser who went down, as the vainglorious British leaflets dropped over Cairo proclaimed, but Eden. The British Empire has gone down the drain, even though the whole economy of Britain has been placed in pawn by the desperate effort of the lords of the City to maintain and even extend their overseas imperialist exploitation through all the devices of neo-colonialism. Enfeebled Britain has had to be propped up by the United States. And now even the final citadel of the United States has begun to crack.

Clay-Footed Colossus

Only last year Senator Fulbright was publishing his book *The Arrogance of Power* to describe in merciless terms the dreams of omnipotence of the rulers of the United States to act as the world gendarme of counter-revolution. One and a half million American troops have been spread abroad in peacetime to hold down the non-socialist world and threaten the socialist world. The dollar was to displace gold and every other currency and become the world currency. Satellite governments in scores of countries, including the Wilson Labour Government, saw no course but to tremble and obey. Britain was condescendingly included by President Johnson in his New Year address this year among the countries 'dependent on US investment for economic growth and financial stability'. Where now is all this omnipotence? The blows have fallen in quick succession. The dollar trembles, and all the devices of Stockholm will never restore it to its old domination. Against the heroic tiny nation of Vietnam the shameful war of aggression of the American giant, conducted with over half a million troops, more bombs than in the second world war, bestial weapons of destruction against the civilian population, and limitless expenditure to bankrupt even the American budget, is ending in ignominious failure, not only in face of the resistance of the Vietnam people, but of the anger of the whole world and the revolt of all progressive sections of the American people. The big-mouthed braggart General Westmoreland has had to be recalled. The painful path towards negotiations, which can only have meaning for the ending of the aggression and the withdrawal of the invaders, has begun.

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Writing on the Wall

And within the citadel of the old order, within the United States, within Washington? The scenes which have followed the murder of Martin Luther King have revealed to the whole world the deep instability and mounting inner conflict which is rending the once idealised American paradise of the model 'new capitalism'. The English historian Arnold Toynbee, no friend of communism, after visiting the United States for the eighteenth time during three months in the latter part of last year, recounted to the London correspondent of *Life* the transformation he had found:

> In my opinion there were more changes in the past 24 months than in the preceding period of more than 40 years . . . Two years ago the Americans regarded themselves invulnerable . . . It seemed to them that America could overcome the Vietnam obstacle in a single leap, as incidentally every other obstacle . . . Since then a radical change has taken place . . . In these two years America has been shaken soundly both from the outside and from the inside. The rank-and-file American feels confused, he feels miserable . . . The youth is rising up against the elder generation. The tragic rebellions about which you know were a terrible blow for my American friends—it was harder for them to stomach them than the Vietnam war . . . Such events were unthinkable not only in 1925 but in 1965. At that time America lived in an atmosphere of illusory calmness of soul, in illusory bliss, and now all this has collapsed.

Like a symbol of the new order of the citadel of capitalism, the President, who dispatched half a million troops to sustain his puppets in Vietnam, has himself to be protected by a surrounding array of thousands of troops with bayonets at the ready, by parachutists and machine guns strategically deployed around the White House, with another company of infantry deployed around the Capitol, to hold off the fear of assault by the majority of the population in the capital city of the United States. The internal tension accompanies the external tension, and each exacerbates the other. The cracks in the idol have become manifest to the whole world. This is not yet the end of the road. There is still a long and hard road for the American people to tread in order to win their freedom, which will mean so much for the freedom and peace of all the peoples of the world. But the writing is on the wall.

Challenge of our Time

We have indeed reached an advanced stage in that world transformation which Marx was the first to illuminate and predict, to reach understanding of its laws, and to give guiding lines for the

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working people to win through. The nineteenth century spokesmen of capitalism thought they had reached finality; that the social and economic laws of their system were eternal laws; that the smooth wheels of progress would bowl along with the inevitability of evolutionary gradualism until all mankind had reached their own happy condition in an era of universal free trade. Marx alone in that mid-nineteenth century laid bare the true character of capitalism as a transient historical stage with a beginning and an end; analysed its laws of motion and deduced therefrom where it would lead; and charted the path forward, through the transition era of crisis and revolutionary struggles, for man to become the master of his destiny and reach to the future classless communist society. Today, now that we have lived through half a century of the general crisis of capitalism and the advance of the world socialist revolution, the spokesmen of twentieth century capitalism, and of its most typical art and literature, have fallen into black pessimism and despair, denounce the nineteenth century belief in progress as a false idol, proclaim that there is no rationality or law in existence, that all is senseless accident without meaning, which only doctrinaire fools would try to interpret, and that the world in general is run by malevolent devils. Marxism alone has never shared the blind self-satisfied false optimism of nineteenth century capitalism, nor the equally blind pessimism and nihilism of its twentieth century successors. Marxism has always represented that strength and freedom from illusions which is based on complete social consciousness of our epoch and our tasks, never denying or failing to face the grim ordeals and heavy struggles through which we have to pass—and there are still heavy battles in front both in Britain and internationally —but always with unfaltering revolutionary optimism based in confidence on the capacity of man to solve his problems and reach to the future communist society. 'The teachings of Marxism', declared Lenin, 'are all-powerful because they are true'.

R.P.D.

CALL FOR GREEK FREEDOM

In our June issue:

MELINA MERCOURI, world-famous Greek actress, speaks out against the Athens dictatorship.

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WE ARE HERE AGAIN!

Bill Jones

Vice-President,
Transport and General Workers' Union

IN spite of all the efforts of the General Council of the TUC to convince the Wilson Government that *their* Prices and Incomes Policy was more likely to be saleable to the workers, these efforts have proved futile.

Not only has the General Council failed to persuade the Government, but it has failed to persuade the rank and file of the trade unions.

(Personally I was always able to understand the view of the General Council on wages, it was never clear what they could do on profits and prices.) The Economic Review of the TUC which was discussed by the executives of the affiliated unions at the Fairfield Hall, Croydon, on February 28 this year, was accepted by a small majority in spite of the fact that many of those who voted for it spoke against it.

This was a bold attempt by the TUC to win over the Government to the view that if it could be left to them their solution to the country's economic problems was more likely to win the support of the workers. We now know the answer of the Government; it is contained within the White Paper on Productivity, Prices and Incomes Policy in 1968 and 1969. (Command Order Paper 3590.)

The vetting of wage claims by the TUC which it was thought might convince the Government that the voluntary method of controlling wage increases was the best has also failed, with the introduction of the White Paper.

On every occasion that the TUC has endeavoured to win the Government over to its view, the Government has cocked a snook at the representatives and leaders of the organised workers within the trade unions.

Of course Government has to govern; one wonders what they would have had to govern were it not for the money of the trade unions. (The reported refusal of the T & GWU to contribute to a financial appeal from the Labour Party is probably a sign that the workers within that particular union are sick and tired of being kicked in the teeth for their money.)

We now know from the White Paper, 'substantial restraint is required over the next two years and the Government propose to

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take power to delay increases in pay for up to 12 months . . . there will be a ceiling of 3½ per cent'. (Para. 27.)

The paper is both detailed and clear on wages control and you can even justify more than the criteria of 3½ per cent, if for example you work a 40-hour week and would be prepared to work a 42-hour week—but how much more you are left to guess. (Para. 29.) On prices, profits and dividends, however, the paper is not exactly bursting with clarity. Here we are hedged around with all kinds of *ifs* and *buts*. In para. 23 we read:

> These arrangements for the supervision of prices are primarily concerned with the prices of manufacturing industry . . . The number of individual prices in the economy makes detailed supervision of all prices impracticable.

Which is just the point that so many of us who have consistently opposed the policy have made.

On dividends and profits among the many threats used within the White Paper—one finds it difficult to see the jugglers of the City and elsewhere losing much sleep—there is the clear indication and advice that excessive profits and overlarge dividends will not have to be shared but kept in cold storage. Para. 54 says: 'All companies are asked not to increase dividends without good reason and to limit any essential increase.'

One could wager with certainty, that many lower-paid workers would like to have the opportunity to advance good reasons why their wages should be increased. The Liverpool busmen are indicating their good reasons for a living wage.

When George Woodcock, General Secretary of the TUC, said at the Fairfield Hall Conference: 'We've all been here before', he was much nearer the truth than some of the erstwhile supporters of the Government's Economic Policy have been.

We were *here* with the MacDonald Government, we were *here* with the Attlee Government, we have always been *here* with successive Tory Governments.

The recent by-elections show that the people know we are here again. They are indicating that they never elected this Government to take us here again, they voted for Socialism and a socialist economic policy and plan.

BACK NUMBERS

Owing to extra demand on January and February 1968 copies we are very short of supplies for these months and would be grateful if readers would send us any copies they can spare.

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FUTURE OF THE LEFT

D. N. Pritt

(*This article is written as a personal contribution to the current urgent discussion on the present political situation and the future of the left. Comments and contributions on this vitally important question are invited.*—Ed., LM.)

THE country is in a mess, economically and politically. Economically in spite of our many advantages—a working class at least as skilled and intelligent as any in the world, an industrially good climate, a geographical situation and access to raw materials as good as anyone else's—we are in a combination of crisis and stagnation so remarkable that our Ministers, efficient politicians elected on a Socialist platform, tell us that we cannot even survive as a nation unless we submit the working class, that high percentage of our population which consumes less than its share and produces everything, to unemployment, high taxation, a heavy rise in the cost of living, savage cuts in social services, and in addition a stop on rises in money wages (i.e. a substantial fall in real wages), whilst at the same time we must maintain fantastic military expenditure to protect the colonial possessions of the rich capitalist concerns which dominate our economy and determine in their own interests the degree of stagnation which we are asked to accept. And meanwhile the rich, the few who consume much more than their share and contribute little to production, meet with little hindrance to the increase of their wealth and their incomes.

Politically, the Labour government is vigorously seeking to apply to our economic ills all the Tory 'remedies' which have been applied over and over again and have never remedied anything except perhaps the nerves of bankers, servants of what Bernard Shaw called 'that cad among the Gods, Mammon'. It is, in short, fighting the class war on the wrong side. It is a healthy feature of the situation, however much the government condemns it, that these Tory policies are being vigorously opposed by the mass of the population, not only by demonstrations and lobbies but in the voting at by-elections (even though within the limitations of the traditional two-party system) and even in Parliament itself, where more and more MPs, true to their election pledges rather than to the discipline of the Whips, carry their resistance to the vote, and many more of their colleagues wish they had the courage to follow their example.

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This opposition, let us be clear, is thoroughly honest and reasonable, for it is directed against policies which are essentially Tory and are a betrayal of every principle and every profession of the Labour Party and its leaders. They are indeed only adopted by the Government because, being under the strong control of—and deeply indebted to—the American ruling class and American and European bankers, they are faced with the alternative, either to adopt policies which appear to their controllers to be to the latters' advantage, or to take courage to break with their oppressors and adopt effective Socialist policies. It is not, alas! in their nature to adopt the latter course.

When the general body of electors seeks to express its opposition and disillusion, our ridiculous two-party system and our electoral laws give them under present conditions in the majority of constituencies in England only one way in which to voice their resentment at the adoption of Tory policies by what they thought was their government, namely, to vote for the Tories who, if they were in power, would carry out the same policies perhaps more ruthlessly and with less skill. (One serious result of this is to create a false impression that the country is turning to Toryism.)

The fact that these anti-working-class, anti-Socialist and anti-social policies hold the field in Parliament, the one place where government pressure is most strongly felt, and where all attempts to oppose are met by threats of expulsion and damped down by the whole atmosphere of 'Don't rock the boat', is creating something of a new situation, in that the main opposition is by now being carried on outside Parliament (and even at times is leading to the premature and dangerous view that Parliament has no longer any place in our society). Let me consider this 'outside' opposition. It is, of course, of great importance and value, however injurious the hamstringing of genuine opposition in Parliament may be. Prominent in this opposition are some of the trade unions, the creators of the Labour Party, already showing signs of fruitful activity. Not only did the 1967 Trades Union Congress pass useful and progressive resolutions on points of cardinal importance, but they have also begun to elect progressive men to important offices; and in the important negotiations with the government over wage policy they are 'showing fight' determinedly. In the present fluid and (from a Socialist point of view) basically hopeful position we are surely at last nearing the point at which the block of right-wing trade union leaders and right-wing Labour Party leaders, which has so

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long held back the labour movement from its proper fight against its class enemies, will lose power and be replaced by more progressive elements in both limbs of the movement. The present unpopularity of the government, which the leadership—however strongly it protests that it must hold to its course—must take desperate measures to allay, should lead, among other things, to a great weakening of this block. When it is once broken, the possibilities of real progress are great.

Whilst the trade unions are of great value to the opposition to the government, they are not, of course, alone. In the broad movement of the Left there is the vital role of the Communist Party, not as an alternative mass party to the Labour Party, but as a key part of the progressive forces in the trade unions and in the labour movement, with its militant, sincere and politically conscious membership, soundly based on Marxist principles, to render services of infinite value in the struggles that lie ahead. And there are many more—in truth, too many—organisations which express the angry opposition of the youth, living under the shadow of war created by dying capitalism which their fathers and grandfathers—who criticise their habits and their hair—have failed to remove from their path, and of other sections of the population too, who stage or take part in endless demonstrations and lobbies to protest, only too rightly, against almost every aspect of government policy.

Looking at all this mess and confusion that confront the British people, of whom I have been one for eighty years and whom I dearly love, I want to reflect for a moment on them, and to ask: What sort of people are they, and how does it happen that, at a time when technological advance should make it possible for them and others to live in peace and security, they are scourged by the seven plagues of Tory Labour and Tory Tories? If we leave on one side for the moment our tiny—and in reality not even largely British—ruling class which, not only in the City of London but also in Washington, New York and Zurich, decides how we shall be governed for its own advantage and for the maintenance of its capitalist system, and not in the least for our benefit, the British people are decent ordinary people with decent ordinary wishes and ambitions. Their main weakness is that too few of them learn to understand the working of our political machinery, something much more complicated than any of the machines they handle in factories.

If that is what we are, we deserve a better deal than we get; but we will only win improvements if we fight with vigour and with

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considerable wisdom; but the more important question is: *why* are we in such a mess? It is not because of any cleverness of the Tories, nor even of any inefficiency of the present government, which is alas! doing the Tories' job better than the Tories could do it. The real reason is that the slowly dying capitalist era has placed not just Britain but the whole capitalist world in the sort of economic and political misery that is only too likely to happen when an obsolete system, unfitted to serve mankind in the twentieth century, is obstinately maintained in being by a few rich and powerful forces for their own selfish advantage. It is in no sense accidental, or peculiar to Britain; it is not primarily the work of Wilson or Heath; it is just the outward manifestation of the general crisis of capitalism.

How are we to deal with this misery? In the long run, of course, we deal with it by establishing a Socialist state; but in the short run? We must, of course, deal with it swiftly, for the present position offers opportunity for destroying existing blocks, and delay may make them worse. The two-party system and the electoral law, on the one hand, and the domination of our economy and politics by American rulers and by bankers, plus the obvious fact that the present government is not likely to do anything but maintain the capitalist structure as far as that is possible, present an apparent stalemate. This stalemate consists in the fact that under existing electoral conditions there is no political organisation other than the Labour Party which can at present gain mass support, so that on the surface the only visible alternative to the Labour government is a Tory government, which would inevitably pursue the same Tory policies as the government. But the stalemate is no more than apparent; there can be no such thing as a stalemate in the political life of people as good as we are. (This was shown—in, of course, a very different situation—in the spring of 1940, by the way in which the People's Convention* movement was established by the spontaneous reaction all over the country to the attempts of the Coalition Government to throttle every expression of public indignation and to create a political stalemate. The great mass of the working class, with some co-operation from other classes, swiftly established a broad united movement which grew steadily in strength until the whole position was transformed by the entry of the USSR into the war a year later.)

The remedy—as has already often been said—lies in the trans-

* For an account of the People's Convention see D. N. Pritt's 'From Right to Left', pages 245-246. *Lawrence & Wishart*, 1965.

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formation of the Labour Party by the progressive forces within it, acting in co-operation with the Communist Party, resting firmly on the trade unions, and rallying and enlisting all the genuine forces at present to be found outside the Labour Party in the various organisations I have mentioned above. (Experience has shown that no such organisation has any prospect of independent life for more than a few years at the most.)

Fears of the collapse and disintegration of the Labour Party itself, in the face of the great opposition shown in by-elections by the mass of the people, and by the trade unions and large sections of the Labour Party itself, are probably exaggerated, although the danger of ten or twenty years of Tory rule is more serious. This danger is now so plain that even the arctic atmosphere of reaction at the high levels in Transport House, which I experienced personally for several years in the 'thirties, must begin to thaw, rendering the task of the Left in clearing the right-wing block discussed above more easy. But the task is urgent for the continuance even for a short time of present policies could lead to more disillusion, more internal quarrels in the Labour Party, and in the end to disaster. On the other hand, the victory of the Left in the political labour movement, which has so often seemed near and so often failed us, now seems nearer than ever before; it would set the country on the path to Socialism for we are much too great and fine a people to be left permanently behind in the world's march into its Socialist future.

In this struggle to save the Labour Party from its leaders, in the interests of all of us, we must beware of all sorts of organisations leaping up to advocate remedies, and to offer leadership. Some of them are honest and well-meaning but are doomed to failure because they have no political roots and do not understand the class struggle; others are enemies masquerading as Socialists, capable of causing trouble and confusion but not of aiding in finding remedies. And in the long run we all know that we can only look for advance to a mass party professing Socialism, i.e. a reformed Labour Party, accepting the Communist Party as a valuable ally and a commando force for a genuinely accepted class struggle, with the backing of progressive trade unions. The Labour Party, thus reformed and rejuvenated, will present a wholly new appeal to the great mass of all sections of the public, and we shall see a new enthusiasm, not directed just to beating the Tories in the party-political game but supporting new policies framed in the interests of the people.

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"I CAN CURE YOU, IF YOU CAN AFFORD THE PRESCRIPTION."

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USA—THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

Ivor Montagu

IN the Berlin of 1945, all around lay heaps of rubble, broken palaces, survivors shivering at the approach of winter—a devastation and an humiliation such as no capital had suffered at that time.

Here was the end of the 2,000-year-old Reich, the humbling of the people reduced into thinking itself better than its neighbours, the end of the story I had seen start in Barcelona and Madrid, with the same sliced and expired dwellings and bedrooms, the same pitifully suspended wallpaper hanging and waving in the breeze. A feeling of satisfaction at such suffering would have been inhuman, out of place. Had there been any temptation to experience it, the thought of the cost to mankind of victory over that misguided generation of Germans would have been sufficient to set it aside. Yet there remained the impression of some terrible logic of the gods that had exacted its own vengeance. The wheel had come full circle.

Sic semper tyrannis. We are not anti-American when we would prick the American bubble-dream of world hegemony. Nor were those who fought to overthrow Hitler anti-German, or for Algeria's freedom anti-French, or for India's anti-British. Man's revolt against usurpation of authority, soon or late, is certain. This is in the character of man. The only way to save our 'kith and kin' in Southern Africa—or the USA for that matter—in the long run is to rebuff their arrogance now, in the short.

When Lyndon Johnson made his speech announcing his withdrawal from the next Presidential race and forced concession of a 'partial halt' to bombing of North Vietnam, whatever its motive, the action represented a recognition of this power inherent in the common man, a check to the pretensions of the modern king.

The 20th century has openly been spoken of as the American Century. I remember, in 1949, a blond young bully of an American millionaire coming over to the table where I sat with D. N. Pritt and Alexander Werth in a Paris (Vietnamese as it happened) restaurant and saying musingly (he was off to a big-game hunt in Africa): 'Yes, it's a big thing for us now, having to rule the world.'

Many things contributed to this megalomania of the heroes of the 'American Century'. And thanks to the 'media' they controlled, too much of it rubbed off on too many US citizens. The monopoly

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of the atom bomb. The gold of Fort Knox. The giant productive capacity. The consumer goods and gadgetry. The share of world trade. All this gave an illusion of omnipotence. The President of the United States, Commander-in-Chief by office, his finger on the nuclear trigger, was spoken of as the 'most powerful man in the world'. It was a capacity to destroy, indeed. But, confronted with the determination of a small nation, it has been revealed as nothing else.

For this strength has been exercised to hold back social change. The bribing and the bullying has not been without its successes of course. Governments have been overthrown or set up in Europe, South America, Asia, Africa. Force or corruption has won temporary victories in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Argentina, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Congo, Iran, etc. A record score of victims was accounted for in Indonesia. The latest win was Greece. Reduction of the immediate predecessor empire, Britain, to a pliant lackey in the industrial and political fields was completed when Wilson came to office.

But Vietnam has stuck in the gullet of this all-swallower. No outsider could have any moral right to urge another people to fight and suffer as the Vietnamese have fought despite every suffering, but the fact is that their fight for their own independence has been on behalf of everyone. It has helped the whole world, and the Americans themselves not least, by puncturing their self-esteem.

It has forced even Johnson to face facts. The gold is running out. No longer is the dollar almighty. The 'Great Society' has had to be abandoned, or at least 'indefinitely postponed'. The most ruthless war ever waged, one in which no lie has been too gross if it would serve as pretext, laws written and unwritten against chemical and defoliant warfare have been torn up like scraps of paper and the US Constitution and the UN Charter followed them into the basket, the distinction between civilians and soldiers and even friend and enemy lost in the count of dead ('Who can tell one gook from another?') and cities 'destroyed to save them', has proved all to no purpose. The military are at their wits end, not because they shrink from any infamy, but because the very latest weapons prove futile (of six of the latest airplanes, at £3 m. each, two are lost in the first three days of use and the others have been grounded) and they cannot think of any others that could improve their own position. Disease germs could serve only to attack their own men and the atom bomb itself would only destroy their last shreds of credit.

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And now, with the murder of Martin Luther King as signal, the chickens come clucking home to their long hot summer roosts.

Americans love to be loved, we are told. Now the US, through its policy, is hated by everyone. None but the most abject client states—Thailand, Taiwan, the Laotian puppets, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand—give it support. No statesmen in the world, unless it be Wilson and Heath—who have thereby forfeited all their own respect—even pretend to believe in it. Not merely U Thant, but the Pope, De Gaulle, Mrs. Gandhi, the stodgy Social Democrats of West Germany, the Canadians and those traditional neutrals the Scandinavians and the Swiss are among those who have publicly dissented. In our own country the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, Conservative newspapers from *The Observer* to *The Times*, the Communist Party, the Nationalists in Wales and Scotland, the TUC, the British Council of Churches and the United Nations Association have damned Johnson's bombing in a consensus (how LBJ used to love that word) more united than any these British Isles have shown since 1945.

Even for the American hawks the favourite domino theory has had the ground knocked from under it. The idea used to be, if one country were lost by America, who any longer would attach value to the American guarantee? Now it is all too plain—what country would now wish to be 'saved' by America if the result of the latter's guarantee is liable to be the fate inflicted on the Vietnamese people?

The 1,000th broadcast of Alistair Cooke, apologist to the British people (via the BBC) for five successive American Presidents, marked the end of an epoch. The USA had 'guaranteed' the integrity of upwards of forty nations round the globe, now it realised this was beyond its power. The assurance, that meant a blank cheque for every tyrant guaranteed, however repressive and corrupt his régime at home, however offensive and dangerous abroad, is now devalued.

It is not necessary to speculate about Johnson's honesty or deviousness in making his announcement of intention 'not to run', or to have rose-tinted glasses about the immediate prospect of ending the Vietnam war, in order to understand the importance of this watershed.

Whether it was Johnson the man, sick and disillusioned by the lies he had been fed by the sycophantic advisers, civil and military, who were all his vanity would tolerate in his surroundings, or the cunning politician, seeing his support melt away to the point when

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even a Bobby Kennedy saw profit in opposing him and he dared not himself electioneer in person in any American community, trying a new trick to stem the ebbing tide, is irrelevant.

Either way, the hawks will not have given up. They never do. Before the echo of his great bombing 'concession' had died away, US planes were interpreting their licence as still extending into more than 250 miles of North Vietnam, doubling the number of their raids there as well as extending them beyond the distance limit, fresh troop reinforcements were on the way and new offensives being boasted. Rusk (disloyal to his master or correctly understanding him?) was preaching the danger of negotiations to the Pentagon allies and laying down conditions (e.g. that any talk of US withdrawal was folly) which would doom them in advance. With even such provocations failing apparently to hinder prospective talks, Westmoreland hurries home to protest.

If the world wishes an end to the wickedness of US Vietnam policy, if the Geneva agreement is to be restored and the arrogant US attempt to destroy it abandoned, the opposition must be just as persistent. It is no good crowing peace prematurely and sitting down when all that Johnson has involved himself in so far may, in intention, have been no more than an election manoeuvre. But, trick or not, it would not have come about without recognition of US extension beyond its strength, and the sequel to this admission will engender its own momentum.

It could never have come about if the rebellion of the world against American pretensions had not included a significant convulsion within the USA already, by a part of the American people themselves, true to the best aspects of American tradition. The facts from newsmen, newsreelmen, TV men and returned soldiers themselves have penetrated all the attempts of administration, corruption and brainwashing and evoked their own response. The clearsightedness of American youth, the decency and scepticism of numerous ordinary Americans, the general troubled American conscience proves that there are far more than ten just men in this threatened Sodom and Gomorrah, rent by racial strife, the focus of the world's mistrust and shame. If we tire not, but pull all together at this stage of crisis, we may avert, both for America and everywhere, the fire and brimstone that still threatens to engulf much more than Vietnam.

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MAY DAY COLLAGE

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JOHN WEAVER

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THE ARTS TODAY

Edited by Stuart Douglass

A DECLARATION OF INTENT

by an actress

Anne Dyson, here stating her aims, was born and trained in Manchester. Doesn't remember when she first wanted to become an actress because it always seemed to be so. She was not encouraged by her father, but her mother (who wanted her four daughters to do what they wanted in life) was very encouraging.

She went to a small Drama School in Manchester and then into Repertory in 1938. Then she met Joan Littlewood who had started her Company in Manchester. Was auditioned for 'The Good Soldier Schweik' (Frau Müller) and worked in the Company for the following four years in classical plays, documentaries and living newspapers. Here she discovered Stanislavsky, Bertholt Brecht, The American Group Theatre, the Moscow Arts Theatre, etc. A creative and exciting field of discovery. Followed a spell in London which included the direction of several plays at Unity Theatre, including Tchekov's 'The Seagull', 'Winkles and Champagne' and other plays. Then back to Repertory, working again mostly in the North at the Chesterfield Civic Theatre, Manchester Library Theatre, The Belgrade at Coventry, Liverpool Playhouse, etc., etc. interspersed with various parts on television.

Spent most of 1967 touring Wales with the Welsh National Theatre and at present appearing in the D. H. Lawrence Trilogy at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square.

MANY changes have taken place since I first set foot in the theatre—particularly in the last fifteen years. Most of these changes have been influenced by the left.

At one time working-class people were depicted in plays as buffoons, or only appeared as butlers and ladies' maids in very

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minor rôles. But since more and more working-class playwrights have emerged a new dimension has been added which has revivified and enriched our theatre.

Work in the theatre is a collective activity. From the director to the assistant stage hand, each has his individual part to play. The actor's job is to discover the complete personality and significance of the character he is to portray; he must interpret truthfully the life of the character and sincerely believe in what he has to do. The search for truth is the essence of acting and of the theatre.

In creating a rôle the actor must study the background of the character, his relationship with the other characters in the play, the situations of the plot, the locale of the play, the period in history, the psychological and the physical make-up. He must have imagination, be relaxed and able to concentrate; he must feel the part truthfully and express the outward manifestations truthfully, i.e. the physical expression in his movement and speech—this creative activity becomes the 'artistic truth' which is presented on stage in front of an audience.

It is an exacting profession and an actor never ceases to learn, because the theatre is concerned with life and life is of people. It is about their needs and frustrations, their joys and sorrows and the actor's job is to interpret these things for the audience (other people) and show them what life is all about and help by doing so to change it. This is politics, and politics is life. A famous actress said recently that all actors should be politicians because they understand people—and the theatre is about people.

Ideally, in order to work in this way, to develop and grow as an artist, to raise standards generally it is necessary to work in a permanent company, to be free of insecurity as is, for example, provided by our National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Unfortunately, although there are many good permanent repertory companies in the country there are more actors than can be used in this way and the majority are out on a limb, working in isolation or signing on at the Labour Exchange.

In many of the repertory companies the finances are so tight that not enough time can be given to the study and rehearsal of plays so that a high standard cannot be achieved. This is rarely the fault of the director or the actors, but the conditions under which artists have to work; restrictions because of lack of finances, the inability of the director to have complete artistic control, stifles the creative spirit and the 'mediocre' prevails.

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It is a sad state of affairs in a profession which is teeming with talent, which has so much to say, where so many difficulties prevail to prevent the growth and expansion of artistic expression, and the only solution is the complete recognition of the need for time, study and *security* for the actor to enable him to present the art of the theatre to the people he serves.

ANNE DYSON.

FILMS

John Weaver

'IN COLD BLOOD'

THOSE WHO PUT DOWN their copy of the Marshall McLuhan book at the point where he was explaining how the alphabet gave rise to the health service might well take it up again before going to see *In Cold Blood*, because it seems that the psychological effect of the film medium and the curious nature of our mental attitude towards viewing a film contribute largely to its failure.

In Cold Blood re-creates the slaughter of the Clutter family, the circumstances leading to the conviction of the murderers and the subsequent hangings. All these events are faithfully reproduced by director Richard Brooks, who has approached his raw material in the same way as Truman Capote, author of the book, taking pains to preserve factuality and report every detail. Yet there seems to be a general reaction: 'Why should he want to film this horrible spectacle?' This is understandable. The film does not set out to be entertaining. Brooks makes no attempt to deal with the implications of the crime. The direction is an exercise in objectivity and offers no fresh insight into the psychology of the killers. Perhaps, by following closely Capote's methods, Brooks, who also wrote the screenplay, was in fact repeating Capote's experiment. Eric Rhode, writing in *The Listener*, said that, 'He (Capote) entered into a game with chance which offered the greatest possible challenge to critical intelligence—to discover significance from the least tractable material.' As McLuhan points out, the transfer from the real world to that created by film happens so completely and subliminally that those undergoing the experience accept it without critical awareness. In passing on the job of the evaluation of this irrational crime to the audience, Richard Brooks has presented it with an impossible task.

McLuhan talks of the movie as being the method by which we 'roll up the real world in order to unroll it as a magic carpet of fantasy'. This is arguable because it is not necessarily the deliberate motive of the film maker, but it is nevertheless the net result of the process. The film, however, conveys a stronger impression of reality than the other plastic arts. It is an illusion we have been educated to accept and it is as important for the

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director to avoid destroying the illusion as to do anything positive to create it. Paradoxically, this involves him in avoiding a too-specific use of detail. This is largely the area in which Brooks is guilty of an error of judgement. By actually showing us the body swinging on the gallows we are only more convinced that it is a dummy. Brooks' trouble in filming the actual supermarket where the killers bought elastoplast is admirable but unnecessary. A completely abstract film could have brought out the personality of the crime and given it some social purpose. In attempting to unroll his carpet of reality, Brooks has suffered a reversal of the whole process and the result is a grotesque and meaningless fantasy.

SCULPTURE

Bob Dawson

BARBARA HEPWORTH

(A retrospective exhibition of her work is at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, London, until May 19.)

THERE ARE THREE WAYS of looking at Barbara Hepworth's work. The first: 'What is it all about? I don't understand it. Of course I don't know anything about art. You need to be educated to it really, I suppose. I'm a square really.' The second: 'Hepworth? That's old hat, man. Carving? What do you think of Piché—Caro—? Here! Here are some steel plates; have a go at welding.' (And the stubborn little student says: 'But I *like carving!*') The third: 'Do I like her work? Well, let us look at it.'

Rarely, if ever, does one like all of an artist's work; never all equally. In this exhibition there is one sculpture called 'Construction (Crucifixion)' that looks like a bit of 1930 cinema architecture. This is the only piece in the exhibition that I can positively say I dislike; some I feel neutral about, some are ravishingly beautiful and moving.

While I advise everybody who can to go and see this exhibition, it is, in fact, the worst possible way of seeing her work. The impact of so many works of strong emotional content so close together is disturbing and almost self-destructive. The forms with which she concerns herself are well enough known by now: womb-like, female-curved, egg-shaped, but powerful, harking back to female symbolism through the ages. They express indestructible, creative energy.

Of this Barbara Hepworth is conscious. But the order inherent in them is instinctive. Professor Bernal has pointed out the dimension of surface in her sculpture, the mathematical subtlety of which she is not conscious and which she does not understand intellectually. But then neither do most of us and there is no reason why we should. The satisfaction derived from a work of art is on a much deeper level (than the superficial 'What is it?')

Many people find Hepworth's work cold. Nevertheless it is an affirmation of positive values and at sixty-five she can still re-examine her work and develop new ideas as the sculptures of the last two years show.

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POETRY

HOLY LOCH

Conceived

Administration's brain child
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—This man's mellow, that man's moral, views—
And fertilised by the public purse

This creature surfaces

A kind of Ahab's whale. With fabled bones
Conquerors thwarted and drowned metaphors,
Yachtsmen radioing, it takes
Its place in nature. We grew rude

To hear beasts bellowing, staggered from sea
With a word and struck an attitude.
A tang in the wind, the sea visits us
Angry or gentle.

This mechanism, tossing

Foam from its tower, is our brain
Launched or becalmed; under Northern Lights
It thrives on secrecy. Only a seagull

Scared out of its wits, flies across long miles

Then inland circling
Above the citizen with his wits about him
Settles upon the fields of spring.

FRED GRUBB

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The Executive Council greets all members and fellow trade unionists on this day, which annually affirms the resolution of all to work in unity for common aims.

The General Executive Council of the

The Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers

on behalf of all our members, greets workers the world over. 'Let us all unite in our endeavours to achieve a world at peace.'—D. McGarvey, President.

May Day Greetings to all Blackburn comrades from Harry Brindle, hoping to join them soon.

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AUSTRALIA AND VIETNAM

Judah Waten

THE previous Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, died on Sunday, December 17, 1967. According to the official report issued by the Commonwealth and Victorian police the Prime Minister's death was due to accidental drowning in Cheviot Bay Beach, Portsea, Victoria. Hurriedly prepared, the report attempted to explain why the late Prime Minister went swimming in the turbulent, remote Cheviot Beach.

In a reflective mood, Bruce Grant, the political commentator of *The Melbourne Age*, one of Australia's leading daily newspapers, wrote on January 20, 1968:

> It is two years today since Sir Robert Menzies stepped down as Prime Minister. They have been two raw and boisterous years in which the surface of Australian politics has been disturbed by a series of dramatic and sometimes unique events.
>
> Mr. Holt's strange death, two visits by an American President, the new leadership of Gorton and Whitlam, the Vietnam controversy, Britain's military withdrawal from South-East Asia, the Australian decision not to devalue, the attempted assassination of Mr. Calwell—these have been the headlines in a chronicle of shift and change.

Less than a week after Mr. Holt's disappearance an impressive memorial service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, though the Prime Minister's body had not been found, and apparently will never be found according to the official report.

To the memorial service came the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, accompanied by 200 advisers and security guards including the top hawks, W. Rostow and Clark Clifford, and 300 US journalists. America's retainers, Presidents Park, Thieu and Marcos of South Korea, South Vietnam and the Philippines, respectively, and a Chiang Kai-shek stand-in from Formosa, also attended as did Prince Charles of Britain, Harold Wilson and Edward Heath.

Great security precautions were taken at the Cathedral. According to *The Age* of January 20:

> On Thursday night a Victorian police inspector and detectives escorted a US security agent through the Cathedral.
>
> At the security agent's insistence, the red and green bunting (on a Christmas tree) was removed. These were the colours, he said, of the National Liberation Front.
>
> He also pointed out that there were still traces on President Johnson's limousine of the red and green paint with which it was splashed during his earlier visit to Melbourne.

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As was to be expected President Johnson held the centre of the stage at the memorial service. Mr. Harold Wilson was relegated to some back pew. He was rather like a forgotten man. On his arrival at the Melbourne Airport he had been left waiting on the tarmac, no official car being immediately available. No Labour leader was there to welcome him. It was widely known that no local Labour leader wanted to be photographed with him; it could only sully their reputations in the Labour movement.

No doubt the President was upset by the untimely death of Harold Holt. After all, the Australian Prime Minister had shown himself to be ardently pro-American, had coined the notorious phrase 'all the way with LBJ', had trebled Australia's commitment in Vietnam and sent National Servicemen there.

But it was not only the President's grief at the loss of a personal friend that caused him to fly to Melbourne accompanied by his warlike aides. There was a weighty political reason as well.

We shall have to start with the melancholy event of December 17 to lay bare the political reason.

Less than an hour after Canberra had been informed of the Prime Minister's disappearance a bitter struggle for the succession broke out. It also became apparent that far from having presided over a happy and united government, Harold Holt in his last days was sorely troubled by dissension, the most serious in his two years as Prime Minister. According to *The Age* the fate of the Holt government had actually hung in the balance as the 'Liberal and Country Party coalition partners fought bitterly over whether to devalue the Australian dollar' (January 20, 1968).

Mr. Holt's natural successor, Mr. McMahon, the Treasurer and deputy leader of the Liberal Party was prevented from becoming Prime Minister by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. McEwen, the leader of the Country Party, the chief advocate of devaluation. Mr. McEwen stated quite bluntly that the Country Party would not serve in a Government lead by Mr. McMahon. This cleavage also reflected the sharp conflict between two sections of Australian capital, the one closely associated with British interests and the other tied to the USA, echo, too, of the British-American clash of interests in Australia.

Devaluation was not the only contentious issue in the late Holt government. There were sharp differences on the increasing American takeover of Australian industry and metal and oil resources which resulted in the virtual elimination of all Australian participation

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in ownership. 'We have no partners in our foreign subsidiaries', the Chairman of General Motors said.

According to a former New South Wales Premier, J. T. Lang, American takeovers in Australia have developed alarmingly since the war. As examples he cited the motor-car industry dominated by the American Big Three, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, the offshore oil by American firms like Esso, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, and the vast mineral deposits (iron ore, bauxite, nickel, etc.) which in Mr. Lang's words, 'look like all ending up in the hands of American capitalists' (*Century*, January 19, 1968).

However, the most serious inner conflicts in the Holt government from the standpoint of the American administration were those which arose directly out of the war in Vietnam.

Firstly, there was no unanimity on the extent of the increase in size of the Australian commitment in Vietnam in the coming months, and some influential members of the cabinet were lukewarm about committing the Australian forces in Vietnam to more dangerous areas outside their so-called province.

In the seething atmosphere of personal conflict and intrigue the American administration feared that a new Prime Minister could emerge who would not go 'all the way with LBJ', particularly as Mr. McMahon, considered to be reliable in Washington, had been eliminated as a prospect. Hence the compelling political reason which saw the top brass headed by the President fly to Melbourne for the memorial service.

During his short stay in Australia the President acted like a Roman emperor in a far-flung province. He inspected all his minions. Liberal Party chiefs as well as the aspirants for the Prime Ministership. The Leader of the Labour Party, Gough Whitlam, also had an audience with him—in fact the President gave him more time than all the others who saw him.

According to well-informed Melbourne press circles the President made it clear to the Liberal Party chiefs that he hoped to see a strong pro-American, pro-War Prime Minister elected and an increase in the number of Australian troops and airmen in Vietnam. The same well-informed circles state that the President told Mr. Whitlam, who was about to set out on a tour of South-East Asia, that he regarded with disfavour the decisions of the Federal Labour Party Conference to oppose the war in Vietnam, and that he favoured the adoption of a bi-partisan policy.

Now the upshot. The Liberal Party elected the right wing John

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Gorton as Prime Minister and the new Government includes W. C. Wentworth, the McCarthy of Australia, the most irresponsible and savage anti-Communist in the Federal House. Neither Menzies nor Holt would have him in their Governments. This gentleman once called the late Dr. H. V. Evatt, a paid mouthpiece of the Communists. Even *The Age* said: 'As a proponent of reactionary political thought, his presence gives rise to apprehension.'

In the short time since Gorton assumed office Australian troops have assumed a more dangerous role in Vietnam with resultant larger casualty lists.

And the Minister of Labour and National Service, Mr. Bury, has openly proclaimed the Government's guns-before-butter policy. In a speech on March 2, 1968, Mr. Bury admitted that Australia had been forced to sacrifice higher living standards to pay for a higher defence bill. He said defence expenditure had brought growth in living standards to a halt in the past three years. Naturally he justified this in the so-called 'national' interest and demanded further sacrifices in living standards to pay for a even higher defence bill.

In the last month or so anti-war demonstrators have been fined very heavily, and threats against hard-won civil liberties are increasingly being heard as the protest movement continues to grow.

Since his return from South-East Asia the Federal Labour leader Gough Whitlam, who regards himself as a man of destiny and believes that nature cut him out to be Prime Minister, has given evidence that he had seriously pondered President Johnson's words. In the words of the most hawkish political commentator in Australia, Peter Samuel (*The Bulletin*, February 24), 'Mr. Whitlam of 1968 is definitely to the right of Mr. Whitlam of 1967, especially as measured in foreign policy . . . in matters of substance Mr. Whitlam has now thrown off the protesting Left almost completely and developed a policy which is quite plausible and defensible'.

Mr. Whitlam has now set out to revise the decisions made by the last Federal Labour Party Conference which declared that the Australian Labour Party was opposed to the war and would work to reverse the present government's policy on Vietnam. He has savagely attacked the former Labour Party leader, Arthur Calwell, for his vigorous campaign against the war, although this was in full conformity with Labour policy.

Mr. Whitlam has, in fact, demanded that the Labour Party let him have his head in interpreting party policy, in reality that it permit him to repudiate the decisions of the Federal Conference.

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Indeed he would be ready to discipline those Labour Party branches which try to carry out conference decisions.

To date he has not received the support he had hoped for. The extreme right wing journal *The Bulletin* has complained bitterly that Mr. Whitlam has not been able to get the numbers to impose his new policy. Events, too, in Vietnam proved him a poor prophet and his earlier supposedly with-it electoral image has become somewhat moth-eaten, in the light of the recent electoral defeats suffered by Labour in the state elections in New South Wales and South Australia. No wonder it is being said in Labour circles that Mr. Whitlam bids fair to become the architect of Labour's greatest disasters.

The increasing opposition to the war in Vietnam finds expression in many sections of the community such as teachers, writers, artists and actors. About a recent demonstration held in Sydney, in which a number of distinguished writers took part, the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote:

> What is intriguing about the Sydney effort are the unexpected names on the programme.

Today, Australia is being swept by a wave of strikes in demand for increased wages. It is admitted by Government spokesmen that the strikes are directly related to its guns-before-butter policy which is rejected by the whole of the trade union movement.

As a recent statement by the National Committee of the Communist Party suggested, the new Gorton government is no stronger than its predecessor and is no more likely to overcome the serious problems confronting it, exacerbated by the war in Vietnam.

Tell it to the Marines!

(British news commentators, repeating official American handouts, continue to refer to the 'North Vietnamese divisions' fighting in South Vietnam. The following news item is therefore of interest.)

'General David Shoup, former commandant of the Marine Corps, and one of a select group of retired military men on the side of the doves, said today that the Administration's claims that United States interests were at stake in the Vietnam war were unfounded.

' "The people we are fighting are 99 per cent South Vietnamese", he told the Senate foreign relations committee, adding that it was "ludicrous to think that because we lose in South Vietnam somebody is going to be knocking at the door of Pearl Harbour".'

(*The Times*, March 21, 1968)

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NOVEMBER 1917: DOCUMENTS OLD AND NEW

Andrew Rothstein

ON October 23, 1917, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin said (as he had been insisting in several letters) that a kind of 'indifference to the question of insurrection' had grown up among his comrades lately, and that this was 'intolerable'. It had long been 'high time to turn attention to the technical aspect of the question'. The Central Committee (save for Kamenev and Zinoviev) agreed with him, recognising that 'armed insurrection is inevitable, and conditions are ripe'. It requested all Party organisations to 'discuss and settle all practical questions from this standpoint'.

Sure enough, on October 25 the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet—on which the Bolsheviks and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were now in a majority—met in private session to hear recommendations for the formation and working of a Military-Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet. They were brought in by P. E. Lazimir, on behalf of the leaders of the Soldiers' Section of the Soviet—three Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, three Bolsheviks and one Menshevik. The MRC was to consist of representatives of a number of soldiers' and workers' organisations, in addition to the Presidium (working leadership) of the Executive Committee. It should meet behind closed doors, elect a bureau (steering committee) of no more than five, and keep in touch with the troops of the Petrograd garrison (this was wartime) through a standing conference of their delegates. Only the Menshevik members of the Executive opposed the proposal, which was adopted.

Next day the full meeting of the Soldiers' Section, on a report by Lazimir—and with Sadovsky, one of the Bolshevik leaders of the Section, in the chair—endorsed the report by 283 to 1, with 23 abstentions (chiefly Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, followers of Kerensky). In its turn, the full meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—elected directly by the 400,000 workers and as many soldiers and sailors of the capital—approved the scheme by an overwhelming majority, only 3 or 4 voting against.

The Military-Revolutionary Committee first met on November 2. From that time it was in almost continuous session. And it was this body, organised by the working people on a democratic basis without

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any precedent in history, that carried out the Socialist revolution a few days later, in all its practical and technical details.

For many years, however, there has been passionate controversy, whenever the history of those days has been discussed, over whether Lev Trotsky, who had been elected chairman of the Petrograd Soviet on October 8 (after the Bolsheviks and Left SRs had won their majority), was also chairman of the Military-Revolutionary Committee, and thus its chief guide and leader. It was Trotsky himself who first made this claim a major question of dispute, in October 1927, and his supporters abroad immediately gave it great publicity. The late Isaac Deutscher did the same, in a biography of Stalin in 1949. When the latest reprint of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook The World* appeared in 1961, the controversy broke out again in the correspondence columns of *Tribune*; and the recent publication of Robin Page Arnot's *Impact of the Russian Revolution in Britain* revived the debate once more.

But throughout, Trotsky's partisans have avoided—or very likely have been ignorant of—the documentary evidence, preferring to rely on what Trotsky himself claimed, or on what foreign writers years later asserted on his authority.* Yet it is authentic contemporary documents that are of primary importance in such cases.

Since 1917 *Rabochi Put*, the Bolsheviks' daily then temporarily replacing *Pravda* (suppressed by Kerensky), has been available. On November 6, 1917, it published the first bulletins of the MRC, dated November 2 and 3. These gave the list of the MRC's bureau—three Bolsheviks (Podvoisky, Sadovsky and Antonov-Ovseyenko, all leaders of the Bolshevik Party's Military Organisation) and two Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (Lazimir and Suharkov, active in their party's similar organisation). No mention of Trotsky—but the list of bodies represented on the MRC, beginning as it did with the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet (which consisted of 4 Bolsheviks, 2 SRs and 1 Menshevik), meant that Trotsky as chairman of the Soviet was a member of the MRC.

Since 1917, also, the files of the official *Izvestia* have been available. They contain an order (November 10) to the revolutionary garrison of Petrograd and the proclamation of a state of siege—signed 'N. Podvoisky, chairman of the Military-Revolutionary Committee'. They also contain an order (November 11) to district Soviets and factory committees about urgent measures to repel Kerensky's

* Trotsky's sympathisers in the political struggles among the Bolsheviks had made the assertion as early as 1925, in a reference book, *Communist Calendar*—on which he in turn relied later in his polemics against Stalin.

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bands—signed 'Lev Trotsky, chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, People's Commissar. Nikolai Podvoisky, chairman of the Military-Revolutionary Committee, commanding the Petrograd Military District'.

Since 1919 John Reed's book has been available—that of an eye-witness. It mentions Lazimir as chairman of the MRC on November 5 (p. 47 of the 1926 edition, p. 49 of the 1961 edition). It also reproduces the two texts from *Izvestia* just mentioned. Since 1921 *Through The Russian Revolution*, published in the USA by Albert Rhys Williams, another eyewitness, has been available. It includes a facsimile of the order signed by Trotsky and Povoisky, with an English translation.

Nowhere, either in these books or in the Soviet newspapers of the time, is there any suggestion that Trotsky was chairman of the MRC, or bore any special responsibility for leading the insurrection. Wherever the post is mentioned in these sources, it is with the names of Lazimir or Podvoisky. Nor is there the slightest ground for the belief that the Petrograd Soviet—formed in that revolutionary year—was constituted like a staid British borough council, with the chairman 'ex-officio member of all committees', as some have hopefully suggested. No such rule existed.

During the last two years, however, three volumes have been published by the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, reproducing for the first time the 4,486 documents of the MRC, without omissions—orders, mandates, credentials, proclamations, minutes, correspondence. There is no question of Trotsky's name being 'forgotten'. It occurs a number of times. And the documents bear out to the full the evidence of the contemporary Soviet press and the contemporary American Socialist reporters.

There were 82 members of the MRC in all, Trotsky among them, as were all the Bolshevik leaders of far longer standing, including Lenin (Trotsky had joined the Bolsheviks that summer). Up to November 9, i.e. until well after the insurrection, Lazimir signs 28 documents as chairman: Podvoisky signs 25 as chairman and 10 as acting chairman: Sadovsky 13 as chairman: 12 other members (including such men as Sverdlov, Dzerzhinsky and other members of the group of five specially drafted as 'stiffening' into the MRC by the Bolshevik Central Committee on October 29), sign either as chairman or as acting chairman on 26 occasions in all, or give instructions which show their leadership within the MRC itself. There is an identity certificate made out to Podvoisky on November 9

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that he is chairman of the MRC—and a pass to enter the Staff Headquarters of the Petrograd Military District (just taken over from Kerensky's men), issued on the same date to 'members of the MRC Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky' (in that order). Podvoisky recalled in 1923 (*Krasnaya Letopis*, No. 8) that Lazimir was chairman at first, and then he himself took over.†

The papers make it clear that the MRC was a fighting, not a talking body. Members worked until they dropped, leading members signed without regard to hierarchy, where a signature was necessary. But not once does Trotsky sign, even as a member of the MRC, either during the dates indicated earlier or at any time afterwards. The reason is obvious. His main work in the decisive days was as chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and as agitator—presiding at the sessions of the Soviet, negotiating with waverers, occasionally going to win over a military unit. He did not do any special organising work in the insurrection, except on specific jobs: and from November 7 onwards was occupied chiefly with the People's Commisariat for Foreign Affairs. That is why, at an evening of reminiscences of participants in the insurrection, on November 7, 1920, Trotsky could say: 'If I were asked who was in it (the MRC), I could not for the life of me say'.‡

How about the innumerable passages in his History of the Russian Revolution (1932), claiming the contrary? They are plain myths —not for the first time in Trotsky's career, as anyone who reads Lenin's writings about him before 1917 can see.

† Lazimir, a young soldier, later joined the Bolsheviks. He died of typhus at the Civil War front in August, 1919.

‡ *Proletarskaya Revolutsia*, No. 10, 1922.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

A further difficulty with which our depressed industries are faced is that effective consolidation and scientific equipment of industry requires considerable expenditure. Capitalism, however, is production for profit, and the capitalists are not likely to invest their money in depressed industries for the purpose of rationalising those industries up to the point of paying a living wage in spite of the appeals of Labour leaders for them to do so. They will only invest in the depressed industries if they consider that the prospects of realising a good profit are present. Up till the moment they have found the prospects elsewhere more attractive. Thus the industries most in need of rationalisation are those which have the least chance of attracting the new capital necessary for their effective rationalisation.

(From 'Rationalisation and British Industry', by J. R. Campbell, *Labour Monthly*, May 1928.)

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BOOKS

Karl Marx: The Evolution of his Thought

Roger Garaudy

Lawrence & Wishart, 224 pp., 25s.

TODAY WHEN THE IMPORTANCE of Marxism is universally recognised and widely distorted Garaudy's deep-going and accurate study of the development of Marx's thought is welcome. But if one expects an easily readable sketch or biographical account there is bound to be disappointment. Garaudy is a leading French Marxist, specially versed in philosophy. Apart from an introduction describing the genesis of Marxist ideas and particularly the 'Fichtean heritage', the book consists of three sections: on philosophy, political economy and political struggle, of which the first is the main and fundamental one. To some extent, therefore, the book tries to do two things at once, to give a systematic exposition of Marxist theory in these three great domains and at the same time to trace the gradual evolution of Marx's thought as a whole. Consequently, in spite of stressing Marx's insistence that the contradictions of the existing world could not be solved by speculative thought, the reader may tend to see Marx's revolution in philosophy as a purely theoretical development. Garaudy's treatment is by no means simple and assumes an acquaintance with philosophical terminology. His often abstract language is probably not made easier to understand by having been translated from the French. We read, for instance, that 'the ego of Fichte, far from being isolated in its sensuous particularity and being controlled by it, expresses the demand for the realisation of rational universality', or 'Each moment is identified with the absolute and reveals it in so far as it expresses the necessary determination, and denies it in so far as it presumes to be sufficient unto itself. This *original relation . . . is dialectics.*' Such phrases are part of arguments that require more than superficial study.

Marx's revolutionary philosophy is discussed in chapters on alienation, materialism, historical materialism and dialectics. Garaudy lays great emphasis on alienation and the transition from it to fundamental concepts. He says, 'the keystone of his (Marx's) thought is the notion of the alienation of labour towards which these three great sources converge'. At the same time, he says, 'the theory of value and surplus-value constitutes the supersession of the theory of alienation, its reconversion', and 'the fundamental law of historical development . . . is the scientific expression of what Marx has up to now called alienation'. And in dealing with dialectics and freedom Garaudy notes that 'freedom is the conquest of alienation'. Garaudy's concern with alienation is understandable because this concept has been much used, particularly by French writers, as a basis for existentialism, and for a distortion of Marxism which makes out that Marx's true views were embodied in a 'humanist' theory of alienation as expressed in his 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844', from which his later views were a departure. Garaudy exposes this, but he is not equally emphatic in disposing of the other distortion which regards the whole of Marxism as a philosophy of alienation. There is only space here to refer to two other features of Garaudy's thought-provoking treatment of Marxist philosophy. The first is his insistence that the connection between social struc-

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ture and production must be studied on the basis of concrete evidence and not dogmatically, instancing Stalin's rigid, metaphysical approach to the stages of historical development seen in his attitude to the problem of the 'Asian mode of production'. The other is his insistence that dialectics is not an *a priori* scheme like Hegel's completed balance sheet of the history of thought. Garaudy insists that in Marx's view 'no concept is eternal, philosophy is not a closed system', and 'there exists no closed, completed definitive list of the laws of dialectics'.

Compared to the first section, the other two are much easier reading. In regard to Marx's great discoveries in political economy, he shows clearly how Marx penetrated the true relations of production in bourgeois society in opposition to vulgar political economy, which is limited to external appearances. Here, too, Marx's use of the dialectical method of analysis is treated in depth. In the section on Marx and political struggles, we get a vivid account of Marx's experience as a practical leader of class struggles and the founder of communist and workers' parties. As Engels said in 1883: 'His name will endure through the ages and so also will his work'.

CLEMENS DUTT

Dialogue of Christianity and Marxism
Edited by James Klugmann
Lawrence & Wishart, 110 pp., 7s. 6d.

STEPPING OUT TOWARDS liberation is often characterised by greater certainty in rejecting what can be endured no longer than by clearness of vision as to what lies ahead. There is good Scriptural precedent for this and it is nothing to be afraid of. Those who are for ever looking will never leap. Do we know what will come out of this dialogue between Christians and Marxists? No: but we are prepared to break out of the sectarianism that has threatened to congeal thought on both sides, we are prepared to listen and learn instead of repeating incantations, we are ready to see that vast changes in the world-situation demand new action as well as new thinking from every man. Hence the dialogue which has been going forward on the Continent for a few years past and now taking shape in Britain, not as a luxury but as a necessity. 'It is an incontestable fact of our age', wrote Roger Garaudy, 'that the future of man cannot be constructed either against religious believers or without them. Neither can it be constructed against Communists or without them'. John Lewis describes it in this volume as 'an essential preparation for such days of crisis and opportunity'.

The articles in this book appeared in *Marxism Today*. The discussion was inaugurated by John Lewis, and Christians of all denominations were invited to join in. They spoke in a personal capacity only, but revealed something of the character and extent of the remarkable changes taking place inside the Christian churches today. Winds of change have reached gale force inside some of these venerable institutions. From the Marxist side, the discussion may be seen as part of the redeployment taking place on the cultural front in Britain as elsewhere and well illustrated by the *Socialist Humanism* volume recently edited by Erich Fromm. Taken as a whole, this volume is most valuable in its indication of the opportunities to be sought for: i.e. the following up of such public discussions as have already taken place so that the dialogue may be extended and deepened, and the fuller utilisation of common action between all progressive groups

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to promote greater understanding. The points made by John Lewis in the opening and closing papers might well be taken as a programme for such work.

Marx knew the importance of fighting the right battles on this as on other fronts: hence his treatment of Feuerbach. Jesus Christ refused to forbid the therapeutic work of men 'who follow not us', to the consternation possibly of the Apostles. Knowing your real enemy and finding your real allies is an important thing in any struggle. In the present world-crisis, men cannot afford to waste time and energy in fighting the wrong battles. Neither Christians nor Marxists can afford to get side-tracked into unessential conflicts. A vast amount of preliminary work needs to be done to clear away ignorance, to focus attention on genuine issues, to make clear what common ground there is for both sides to work on in the engagement with common enemies. This book demands and merits a good deal of patient reflection and discussion because none of the writers are trying to score points, none are evading difficulties, none are pretending that the backlog of suspicions and misconceptions will be swept away easily. But the right start is made in indicating that open discussion, with real open-endedness such as all scientific thinking demands, is possible between Marxists and Christians, in spite of all the follies of the past. Dogmatism of any kind is to be deplored; philosophical idealism to be unmasked, opportunism to be corrected. Sean O'Casey said that the Communist should always be going about learning. This book is a contribution to the kind of learning of each other's position which is a necessity at this time. As James Klugmann and John Lewis remind us this dialogue is really a resumption of something that gained headway in the 'thirties and went underground as the World War came. The experience of the intervening years has made it even more relevant to our work today.

ALAN ECCLESTONE

(The Rev. Alan Ecclestone has been Vicar of Darnall, Sheffield since 1942. He joined the Communist Party in March 1948.)

European Unity. A Survey of the European Organisations

'Political and Economic Planning'

George Allen and Unwin, 520 pp., 63s.

ON THE FACE OF IT, this is a useful reference book. It describes in detail the history, structure and working of various official international bodies set up in Europe since the second world war—the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Western Allies' organisations such as Nato and its economic counterpart the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the 'European Economic Community' (the Six) and its rival the 'European Free Trade Association' (the Seven), etc.

But there is a curious air about the book. While devoting fifty pages to Nato and over a hundred to the EEC and EFTA between them, it barely mentions—in a paragraph or two—the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance set up by the European Socialist countries: it does not even pretend to describe their history or structure. Evidently the authors assume that these countries are not part of Europe—a view they share with such exalted authorities as the Foreign Office and Hitler.

Nor is this accidental. A sticky trail of hostility to the Soviet Union and all its works, echoing the most banal

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American-British official propaganda, runs unbroken through the book. Nato was formed in 1949 to prevent the Soviet Union being 'tempted' to fill a 'power vacuum': all the evidence that the Soviet Union, with its twenty million dead and its tens of thousands of ruined towns and villages, was in no mood to fill any 'vacuum' —and that the US and British Governments, on the contrary, were aiming at just that, as shown (for example, one of many) by the eviction of the Communists from the French and Italian Governments in 1947—is ignored. The Soviet Union, when General Marshall's notorious plan was published in 1947 (after its main principles had been worked out in secret by the State Department and Foreign Office officials), was 'not prepared to take part in a joint recovery programme'—again calmly ignoring the explicit Soviet statements to the contrary, particularly those made on June 28 and 30, 1947, at the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers, with their concrete proposals for a European Committee of Assistance working with the Economic Commission for Europe. The authors tell us there is fear of the 'large and well-equipped and trained Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in Central and Eastern Europe': never a word of the repeated offers to withdraw those forces, if the even larger Nato forces in Western and Central Europe were withdrawn as well. Even on Cuba, in 1962, it was the Russians who 'backed down'—as though the removal of the Soviet missiles (sent to protect the island) was not in exchange for Kennedy's cancellation of the invasion which he himself had threatened and the preparations for which had been brazenly advertised for months in the British and American press.

You need to take this book with a pinch of salt. QUAESTOR

Aims and Methods of Soviet Planning
Mikhail Bor (Introductory note by Maurice Dobb)
Lawrence and Wishart, 256 pp., 50s.

THIS BOOK IS A DETAILED and lucid account of the matters mentioned in its title. The first chapter describes the stages, from 1918 onwards, by which planning of the national economy of the Soviet community developed. The second sketches in broad outline how the economic plans are drafted (with some interesting pages on planning at the factory level); and the third the methods which are used to co-ordinate and check the current and the long-term plans against one another, in the light of experience.

The greater part of the book—chapter four—takes us step by step through the economic plan for 1966-1967, as it was actually worked out. Professor Bor looks not only at the various branches of production (industry, agriculture, transport, etc.) but also at other aspects which often puzzle students abroad, such as the planning of prices. The checking of plan-fulfilment is described in a fifth chapter. The sixth makes interesting comparisons between Socialist planning in the USSR and 'economic programmes', often miscalled 'plans', in the capitalist countries, devoting special attention to France.

Readers of this masterly account will probably be impressed by the contrast it presents with the illiterate trash produced by the 'Kremlinologists' of the daily and (particularly) the weekly press.

Pat Sloan is to be congratulated on providing a full index, so rare in books coming from the Soviet Union.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

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URGENT NEED

WE have always been absolutely honest with our readers in stating the blunt facts of our financial position, and our experience has shown that they would not want it otherwise. So our friends will understand the serious purpose of this appeal, and realise that the same economic offensive now operating against industrial and professional workers is also hitting our journal very hard.

We have always balanced precariously on a financial tightrope. Now the body-blows dealt by devaluation and the Budget have had a devastating effect on our day-to-day expenditure. Paper and printing costs have soared sharply, and the coming increases in postal and telephone rates will place a particularly heavy burden on a journal that has to use these services considerably. We are anxious to avoid a price-rise just now, when it is important that no cash barrier prevents *LM* from reaching as many new readers as possible. This is why we are making a special appeal to our readers, asking for their practical help on two fronts.

Firstly, we ask for a mighty surge of donations to bring our Fund up to the £100 monthly that is essential for coping with our heavy costs. Donations of any size are warmly welcomed and publicly acknowledged.

Secondly, we need your active help in winning new readers. Thousands would welcome our journal if they knew it, and increased circulation would help to solve many of our problems.

The Fund is the life-blood of our magazine, which in the coming months of political struggle will be helping to shape opinion in the labour movement. Let your donations pay dividends in peace and progress by ensuring that our Fund keeps pace with our needs.

Helen Falber.

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